

Correspondence.

DISTRICT SURVEYORS.

SIR,—I fully agree with your correspondent "Scrutator" as to the despotism desired to be exercised over builders by the district surveyors, or at least by those in the new districts. I have myself experienced great inconvenience from the manner in which the clerk to one of the new surveyors (who acts by deputy) performs his duties. If he sees a barrow of bricks or mortar in front of any house in his district, he makes it his particular business to catechise the labourers as to what they are doing. On one occasion he was told that they were cleaning and repairing some drains, and was not persuaded that such was really the case until he had leave to go in and see for himself. On another, he walked into a house where a bricklayer was engaged taking out a range, and seeing that the man was repairing part of the chimney jaumb, which was found to be defective, he expressed much displeasure that no notice had been given to him before the work was commenced. The man replied that his master was not aware that it was necessary to give notice of such work; but the clerk said, his master had no right to think, that was his (the clerk's) place, and he wished to have notice in every case of works to be begun.

This gentleman also requests that a drawing may be submitted to him of any works proposed to be done in his district, which would certainly in some cases be desirable as well to the builder as to the surveyor, if the latter would say before the works were begun or estimates given, what part of the proposed works he perceived were contrary to the Act, and which he could not, therefore, allow to be executed; but all practical men will see the inconvenience and trouble occasioned by it in many cases where the job to be done is but trifling. For instance, I received an order to put up an outside spring-blind to a shop-front in the same surveyor's district, and, in course of conversation, asked him whether there was any objection to it? He said he could not allow it to be fixed at more than ten inches distance from the front wall of the house. I afterwards saw that he had allowed one to be fixed on the cornice of another shop which projected some two or three feet, and on representing it to him, he replied: "That shews you the folly of my answering questions abstractedly, you must send me a notice and a drawing of what you propose to execute, and I will survey the place;" which, I suppose, also means that he will demand a fee for the same, and thus add considerably to the expense of a very trifling work.

Now, if all the district surveyors were to perform their duties in the same vexatious manner, the Act would become the oppression of all persons concerned in building operations; and I think that no time ought to be lost in calling a public meeting of the trade to consider the means of defending themselves from such arbitrary proceedings. I would wish, however, to bear testimony to the fair conduct of all the old district surveyors with whom I have come in contact since the commencement of the new Act, as they have all appeared willing to assist and advise the builder rather than to oppress him, and to endeavour to increase their fees at his expense.

I am, Sir, &c.,

A SUBSCRIBER FROM THE FIRST.

POSITION OF ENCLOSURE WALLS IN KENT.

SIR,—Will you have the courtesy to answer the following question, and by so doing clear up what I conceive to be an erroneous view of the law of freehold property, and settle a most important object to all engaged in building?

I hold certain land in this county, and am about to build a boundary wall in place of a hedge and dike which at present divide my land from the adjoining (which is arable). Of course I wish to take in all the freehold, and to build to the extent of my bounds; but I am told that "dike room" must be left for the purpose of ploughing the adjoining land, so that three feet in width along the extent of the boundary of the freehold must be left unoccupied for the convenience of the ploughmen of the adjoining occupier, in order that he may plough the land to the extreme boundary. I wish, Sir, to be informed whether the common law maxim, "a solo usque

ad coelum," is, or can be, contravened by what I think may be termed "ploughman's law."

By giving your opinion on the above, you will not only render an essential benefit to builders and building proprietors, but confer a favour on one who is at present

Kent, April 24, 1845. A NONSCRIBER.

•• We know nothing that would lead us to suppose our correspondent can be prevented from enclosing the whole of the land which belongs to him: we should not hesitate about doing so.—ED.

ST. THOMAS'S CHURCH, WINCHESTER.

SIR,—In reply to the inquiry which appeared in your last, I beg to say the lowest tender delivered for St. Thomas's Church, Winchester, was, as I have just heard, between 6,000*l.* and 7,000*l.* exclusive of the materials of the old church.

The advertisement for designs stated, that a church was required to cost 4,000*l.* If the amount I have named is correct, great injustice must have been done to the other competitors, as I cannot imagine that any but a very young and very green architect would, without additional means being placed at his disposal by the committee, have prepared a design which has so far exceeded the stipulated amount.

I am, Sir, &c.,

AN ADHERER TO STIPULATIONS.

P. S.—Can you tell me why Mr. Elmslie's design was sent in, in the name of his clerk, Webbe?

TERRA COTTA.

SIR,—Having seen the letter on the subject of terra cotta in THE BUILDER of the 26th instant, I beg to state, that as Mr. Sharpe has no connection with my works, it is scarcely fair that he should be troubled with questions which the manufacturer (and he alone in many instances) can best answer. I shall therefore be glad to reply to any communication on the subject, addressed to me, Ladyshore, Bolton-le-Moor, where I established extensive works in order to manufacture the terra cotta for Leverbridge Church, and where I am now engaged, along with various other works, in preparing material for another church now building at Rusholme, near Manchester, also designed by Mr. Sharpe.

I take this opportunity of correcting an erroneous impression, which appears to be conveyed by the amounts published in the "Companion to the British Almanac" and the "Illustrated London News," by stating, that no "immediate superintendence" by the architect of any branch of the manufacture is now, nor has ever been, necessary to secure the correct execution of any work in terra cotta from plans drawn in the ordinary manner.

I am, Sir, &c.,

JOHN FLETCHER.

Ladyshore, Bolton, April 29, 1845.

•• We have received intimation that G. and C. Bishop, of 3, Benet's-hill, Doctors' Commons, have specimens of the Ladyshore terra cotta, and will give any information that may be required.—ED.

TESTIMONIAL TO MR. JOHN BRITTON, F.S.A.—At the preliminary meeting of the friends of Mr. Britton, held on Thursday, the 24th ult., to consider the best means of testifying their appreciation of his valuable labours, a committee of fifty gentlemen was formed, with power to add to their numbers; and it was resolved to adjourn till the 10th inst., and to invite the co-operation of all persons who are friendly to the object. The committee comprise Messrs. W. J. Booth, E. W. Brayley, F.S.A., H. Broadley, M.P., F.R.S., W. Brockedon, F.R.S., A. Burgess, F.S.A., W. H. Ludlow Bruges, M.P., L. Cubitt, W. Cubitt, T. Cubitt, J. G. Children, F.R.S., G. Corner, F.S.A., Peter Cunningham, T. L. Donaldson, C. Fowler, W. J. Donthorne, T. Grissell, G. Godwin, F.R.S., Nathaniel Gould, John S. Gaskoin, J. E. Gray, F.R.S., J. D. Harding, W. Hosking, F.S.A., W. Herbert, Dr. Ingram, Dr. Knapp, T. Longman, The Rev. J. Mitford, J. B. Nicholls, F.S.A., H. W. Pickersgill, R.A., L. Pocock, F.S.A., Dr. Rees, F.S.A., Lieut. Stratford, F.A.S., The Rev. E. Tagart, W. Tooke, F.R.S., The Rev. T. S. Turbutt, M.A., W. Wansey, F.S.A., T. Unwin, R.A., W. Tite, F.R.S., The Right Hon. Thomas Wyse, M.P., &c.

Miscellaneous.

METROPOLIS IMPROVEMENTS.—The Commissioners of her Majesty's Woods and Forests have, during the last few days, issued their plans for the erection of the houses in Endell-street, between Broad-street, St. Giles, and Long-acre, the gas and water-pipes having been laid down and the sewers constructed. The fronts of the several houses are to be "architectural elevations" of a uniform appearance, and "no objection will be made to buildings of the style known as Elizabethan." The ground excavated, if required by the commissioners, is to be deposited to fill up the low ground around the Millbank Prison. All the pieces of ground to be let on lease, for a term of eighty years from Midsummer day 1845, at a rent of one peppercorn for the first year, and at such rent or rents for the remainder of the term as shall be agreed upon; and the lessee is to forfeit all right to the lease unless the carcass of each house be completed by or before Christmas-day, and the houses and all other buildings be rendered fit for habitation by or before Midsummer-day, 1846. The lessee is to reimburse the commissioners for the expenses incurred on account of building the vaults and sewers, and for paving the street, at the ratio of 700*l.* for a frontage of 114 feet 6 inches, or in lieu thereof 35*l.* rent per annum. The width of the street is to be between 50 and 60 feet.—Times.

COST OF GAS.—From various experiments recently made by Mr. Lumsden, of Monkwearmouth, he found that one ton of coal, which cost 16*s.* produces thirty bushels of coke, twenty gallons of tar, and 9,000 cubic feet of gas. If this is correct, and if we apply the result of these experiments, it will be found that the quality of coke and tar produced from a ton of coal amounts exactly in value to the price of the coal used, and that the 9,000 cubic feet of gas, sold to consumers at its present price, yields to its fortunate makers, the gas companies, a profit of not less than 3*l.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

GLASS PIPES.—Mr. James Hartley, of Bishopwearmouth Glass Works, has, after extensive experiments, succeeded in establishing the practicability of making glass pipes, suitable for the conveyance of gas or water, and has it is also said, proved that pipes, stronger than the ordinary metal ones, and much cheaper, may be made of glass.—Mining Journal.

THE CITY MUSEUM.—At a recent meeting of the Common Council, Mr. Ashurst brought up the report of the City Lands Committee, to whom had been referred the subject of the appropriation of part of the crypt at Guildhall for a museum. The report, which was ordered to be printed, stated that the clerk of the city works had certified that an outlay of 2,000*l.* would be necessary to effect the purpose contemplated.

SITE FOR BATHS.—At the same meeting Mr. Alderman Johnson presented a petition from the Committee for Establishing Baths and Wash-houses for the Labouring Classes, praying for a lease of part of Farringdon Market, next Shoe-lane, for the term of sixty years, at the yearly rent of 100*l.*, at 2,500*l.* premium. On the motion that the petition be referred to the Market Committee, a lengthy conversation arose, in which the majority of the speakers, though friendly to the establishment of baths, and to the general objects of the petitioners, were opposed to the appropriation of the site solicited for the establishment, on the ground that it would interfere with the improvements in the locality, with a view to improve the traffic in Ludgate-hill and on Holborn-hill. The motion was in the end negatived by a large majority.

ARTIFICIAL STONE.—Mr. Frederic Ramsome, of Ipswich, has obtained a patent for the formation of artificial stone. This desideratum is accomplished by chemical process, of a novel description. The materials used are flint, or granite, or marble; and these when pulverized and worked up, form a thick silicious paste. This paste so produced, is placed in moulds of any given design, and upon being subjected to the action of an oven, the contents of the moulds become vitrified; thus the most compact and beautiful designs in slate, or granite, or marble, are produced, applicable alike for ornament as for more substantial purposes; the material is said to be fully capable of withstanding all atmospheric changes, and is durable as flint.